DARK HORSE COMICS
35 YEARS
FREE COMIC BOOK DAY
CRITICAL ROLE
THE MIGHTY NEIN
ORIGINS
CRITICAL ROLE
ALSO FEATURING
THE WITCHER

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Jody Hou Tyler Walpole

Special thanks to Matthew Mercer, Laura Bailey, Taliesin Jaffe, Ashley Johnson, Liam O'Brien, Marisha Ray, Sam Riegel, Travis Willingham, Adrienne Cho, Shaunette DeTie, and Ben Van Der Fluit at Critical Role, and to Kari Yadro at Dark Horse Comics.

Bartosz Sztybor Nil Vendrell Miquel Muerto
Hassan Otsmane-Elhaou

Rafał Jaki and Bartosz Sztybor Jared Dye

Special thanks to CD PROJEKT RED, including Michał Nowakowski, SVP of Business Development; Adam Badowski, Head of Studio; Marcin Blacha, Story Director

In the twentieth year of free comics, we bring you stories expanding on two epic worlds. In *Critical Role*, explore a small but important corner from the adventures of the Mighty Nein, as Luc Brenatto and Marion Lavorre wrestle with their fear of losing the ones they love. You can look for more of our *Critical Role* titles on the shelves now, like our collections of *Vox Machina Origins* series I and II. Then, in *The Witcher*, it's an original tale featuring a run-in with a monster! But a creature—just like the witcher—can understand the pains of being misunderstood. If you need more of *The Witcher* right away, you can find many collections on your retailer's shelves. The most recent comics series is *Witch's Lament* and our most recent collection is *Fading Memories*—both penned by CD PROJEKT RED writer and narrative manager Bartosz Sztybor.

As always, remember to thank your local comic shop for hosting this event!

Happy reading!
Your Friends at Dark Horse Comics

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SCRIPT

.ser COVER AND INTERIOR ART

LETTERING Ariana Maher

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WOODS

SCRIPT

ART

COLORS

LETTERING

CD PROJEKT RED EDITORIAL

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EDITORS

ıK ASSISTANT EDITOR ı

DIGITAL ART TECHNICIAN

DESIGNER

THE LAVISH CHATEAU, NICODRANAS.
HOME
SHUFFLE SHUFFLE SHUFFLE
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
YOU CAN COME OUT.
HI.

GOOD EVENING, LUC.
MAY I ASK WHAT YOU WERE DOING IN MY CLOSET?
EXPLORING.
WELL, AS LONG AS YOU'RE STAYING AT THE LAVISH CHATEAU...
...YOU REALLY SHOULD KNOCK WHEN EXPLORING.
I'M SORRY. I WILL.
YOU'RE REALLY PRETTY.
WHY, THANK YOU.
ALMOST AS PRETTY AS MY MOM.
I COULD ASK FOR NO GREATER COMPLIMENT.

"SHE'S THE BRAVEST, TOO."
I HAVE HEARD THE STORIES. IS THAT WHY YOU ARE EXPLORING?
YOU WISH TO BE MORE LIKE HER? PERHAPS JOIN HER ON HER ADVENTURES?
MAYBE...
IS SOMETHING WRONG, LUC?
I IMAGINE YOU MISS HER VERY MUCH.
WHAT IF SHE DOESN'T COME BACK?

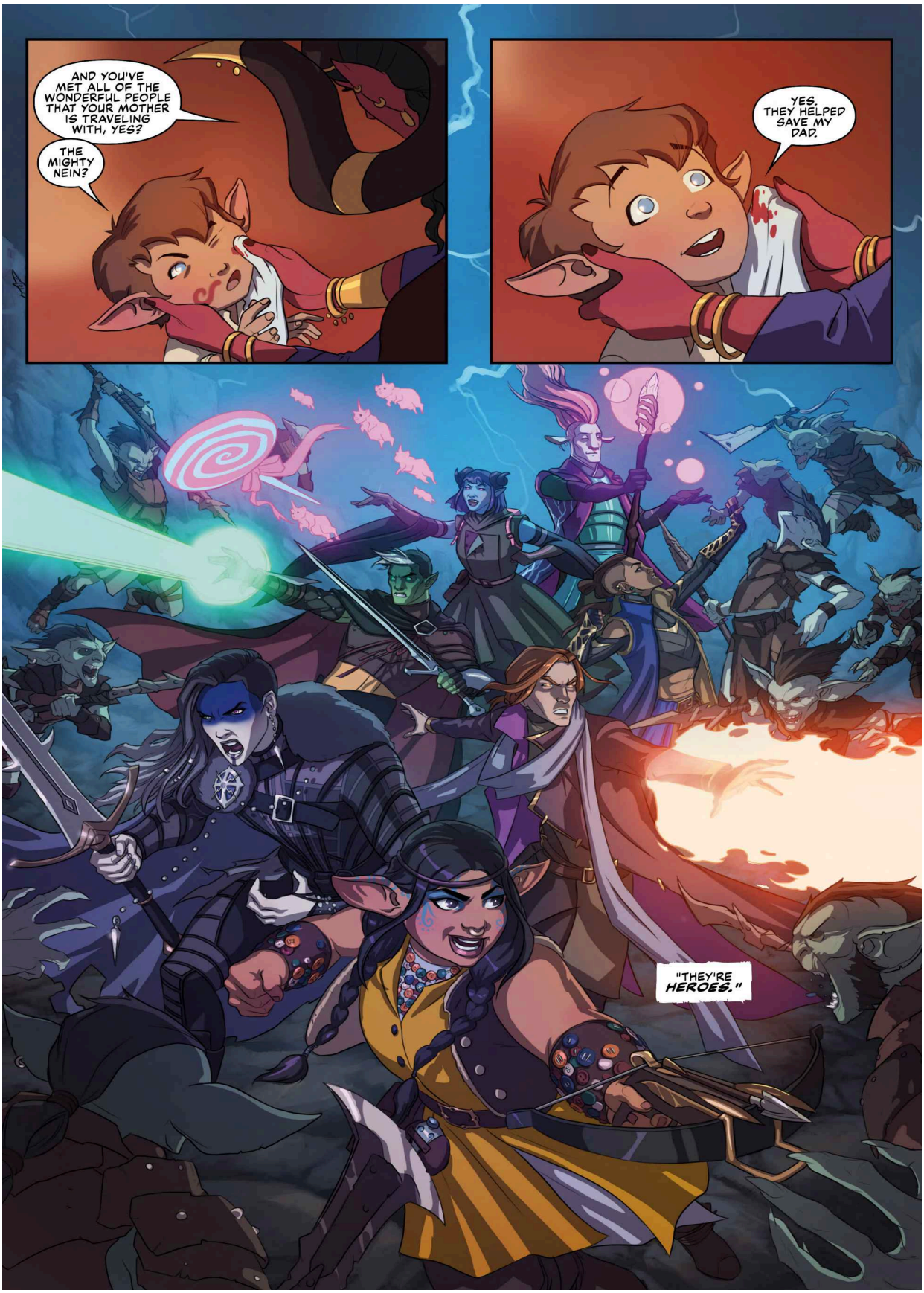
YOU YOURSELF JUST TOLD ME HOW BRAVE SHE IS.
SOMETIMES BRAVE PEOPLE DON'T EVEN COME BACK.
MOMMY!
"EVEN WHEN THEY FIGHT REALLY HARD AND SAVE EVERYBODY."

YOUR MOTHER SAVED YOU AND YOUR FATHER, DID SHE NOT?
AND SHE DID COME BACK.
YEAH, BUT NOT FOR A LONG TIME.
AND MORE BAD THINGS HAPPENED.
DO YOU WANT TO TELL ME ABOUT THEM?
"WELL, DADDY WAS REALLY SAD."
"HE SAID SHE DIED. THAT'S WHAT HE TOLD ME."
AND THAT MEAN LADY WAS ALWAYS WATCHING US...

"HE TOLD ME TO HIDE, SO I WOULD BE SAFE.
"BUT IT WASN'T SAFE.
"I HAD TO RUN AWAY.
"EVERYTHING WAS ON FIRE. AND THERE WERE SOLDIERS WITH ARMOR."
"AND YET, YOU MADE YOUR OWN WAY TO SAFETY, YES?
"THAT IS NOT AN EASY THING TO DO."

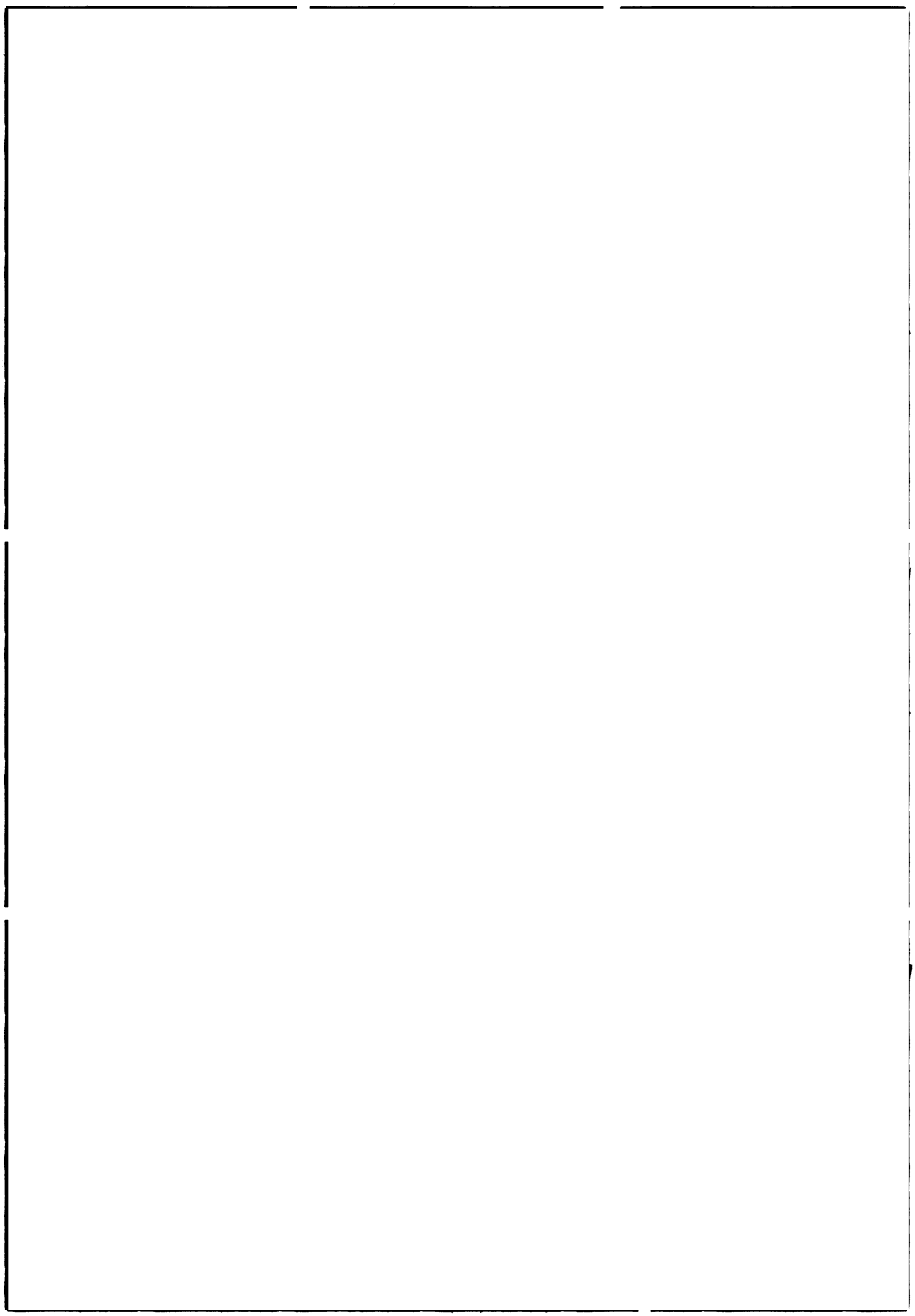
[redacted]

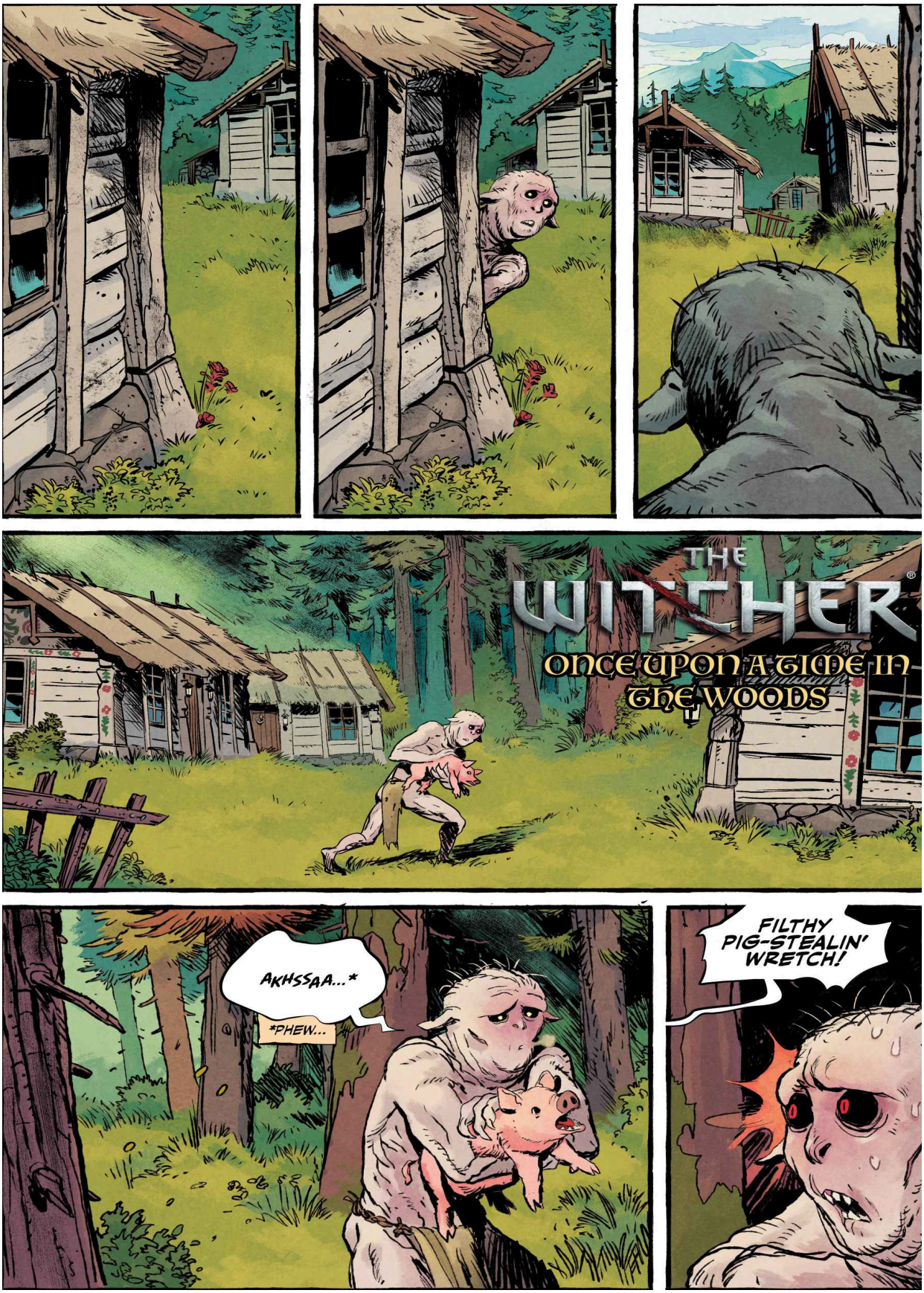
YOU CAN BE BRAVE EVEN WHEN YOU'RE SCARED.
YOU... YOU CAN? BUT WHAT IF YOU'RE SCARED A LOT?
I WAS EVEN SCARED OF HER WHEN SHE CAME BACK.
"DADDY TOLD ME SHE WAS DEAD. SO I THOUGHT MAYBE SHE WAS SOMETHING ELSE.
"SOMETHING BAD, LIKE A TRICK FROM THE MEAN LADY."
A GREAT ADVENTURER MUST ALWAYS BE CAUTIOUS.
BUT NOW YOU KNOW IT IS HER.

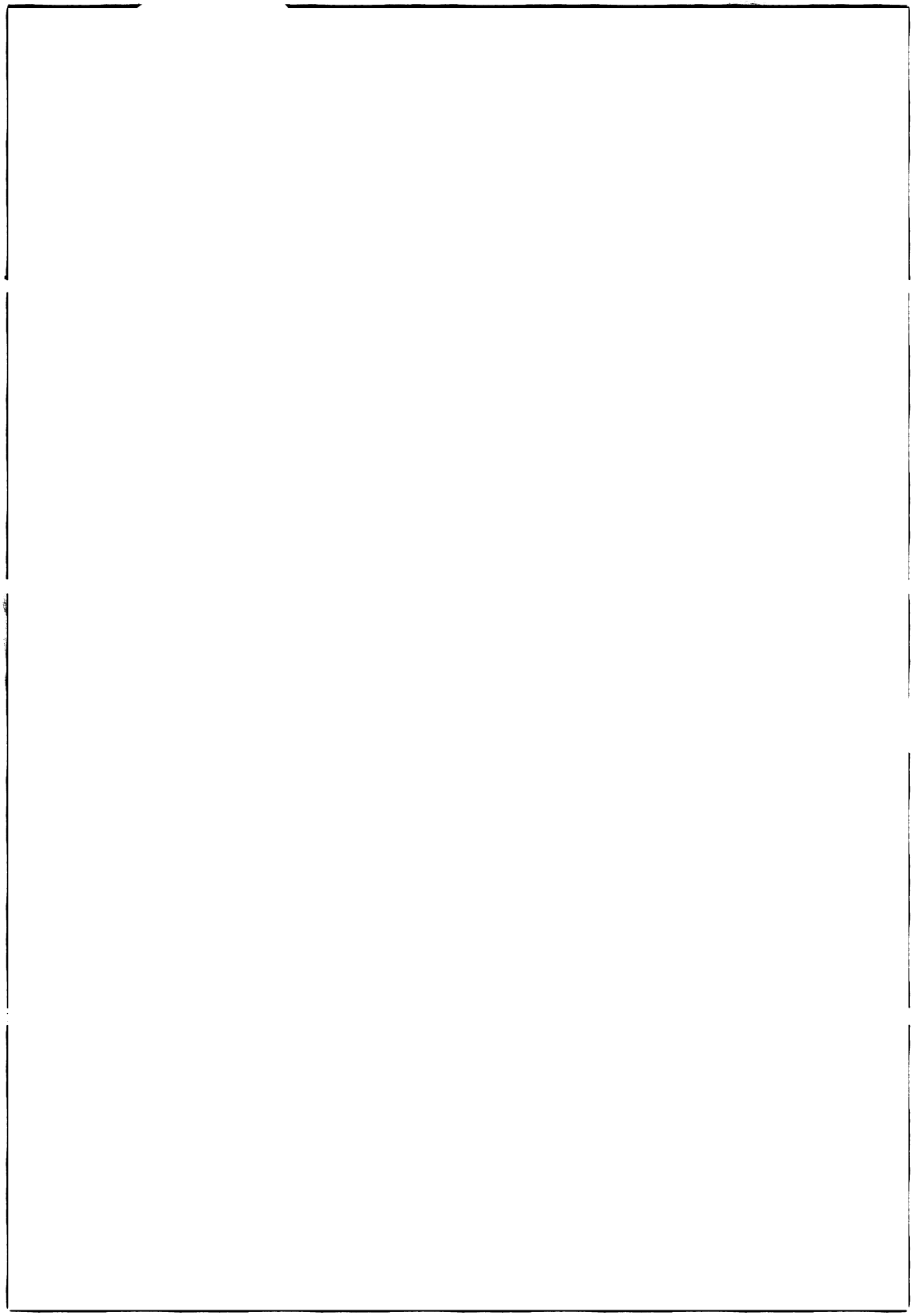

AND YOU'VE MET ALL OF THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE THAT YOUR MOTHER IS TRAVELING WITH, YES?
THE MIGHTY NEIN?
YES. THEY HELPED SAVE MY DAD.
"THEY'RE HEROES."

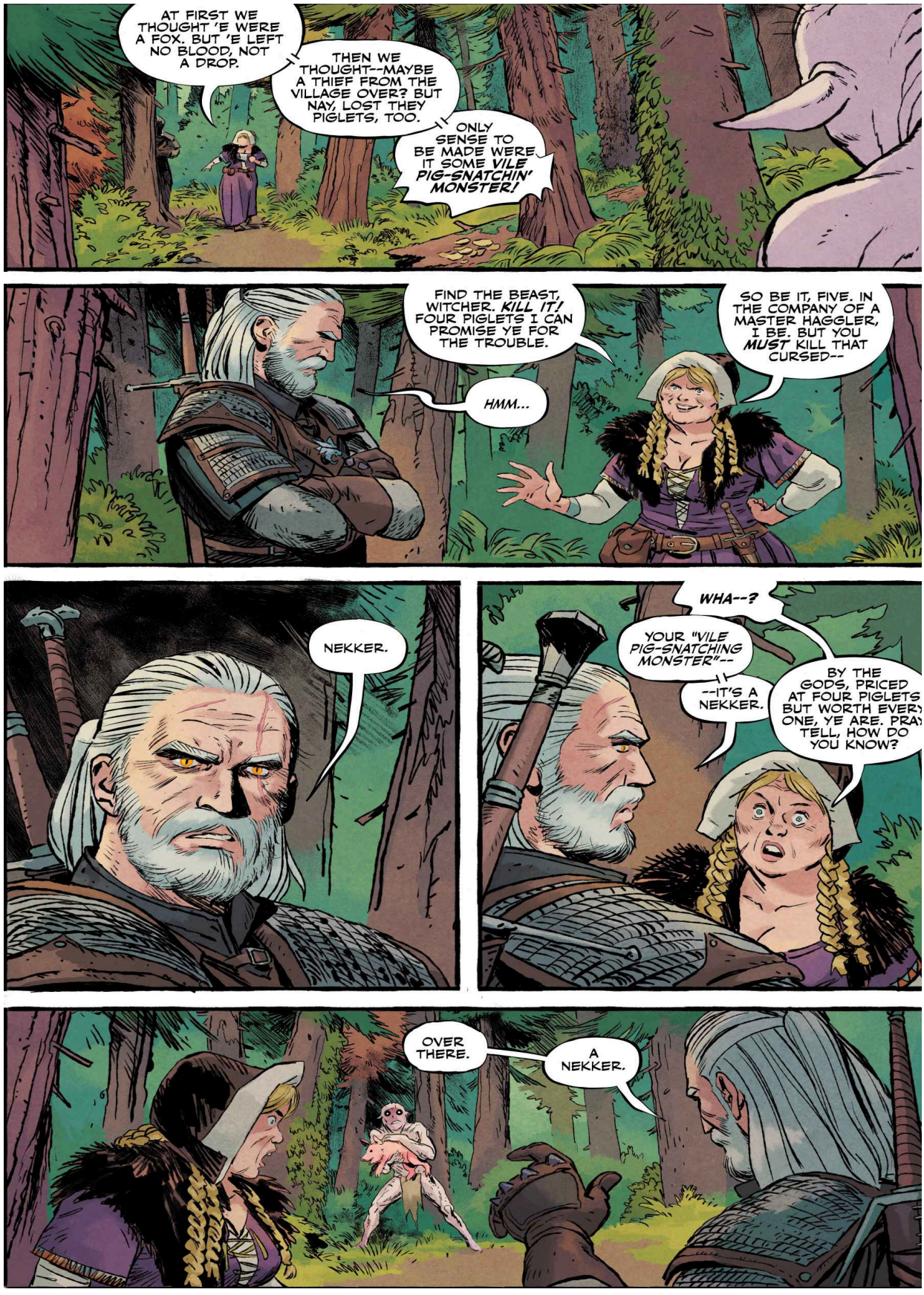
MY LITTLE GIRL JESTER IS AMONG THEIR NUMBER.
ALTHOUGH SHE IS HARDLY A LITTLE GIRL ANYMORE.
OH! I KNOW HER!
"SHE GAVE ME CANDY."
"I'M SURE SHE DID."
SHE TELLS ME OF MANY OF HER EXPLOITS. AND I'M SO PROUD OF HER AND ALL THAT SHE'S DOING.
BUT IT CAN BE VERY SCARY, TOO.
THE COMFORT IS IN KNOWING THAT SHE'S NOT ALONE.
SHE HAS YOUR MOTHER AND ALL OF THEIR OTHER DARING AND STRONG FRIENDS.
SO... THEY'LL BE OKAY, RIGHT?
BECAUSE THEY'RE ALL TOGETHER?

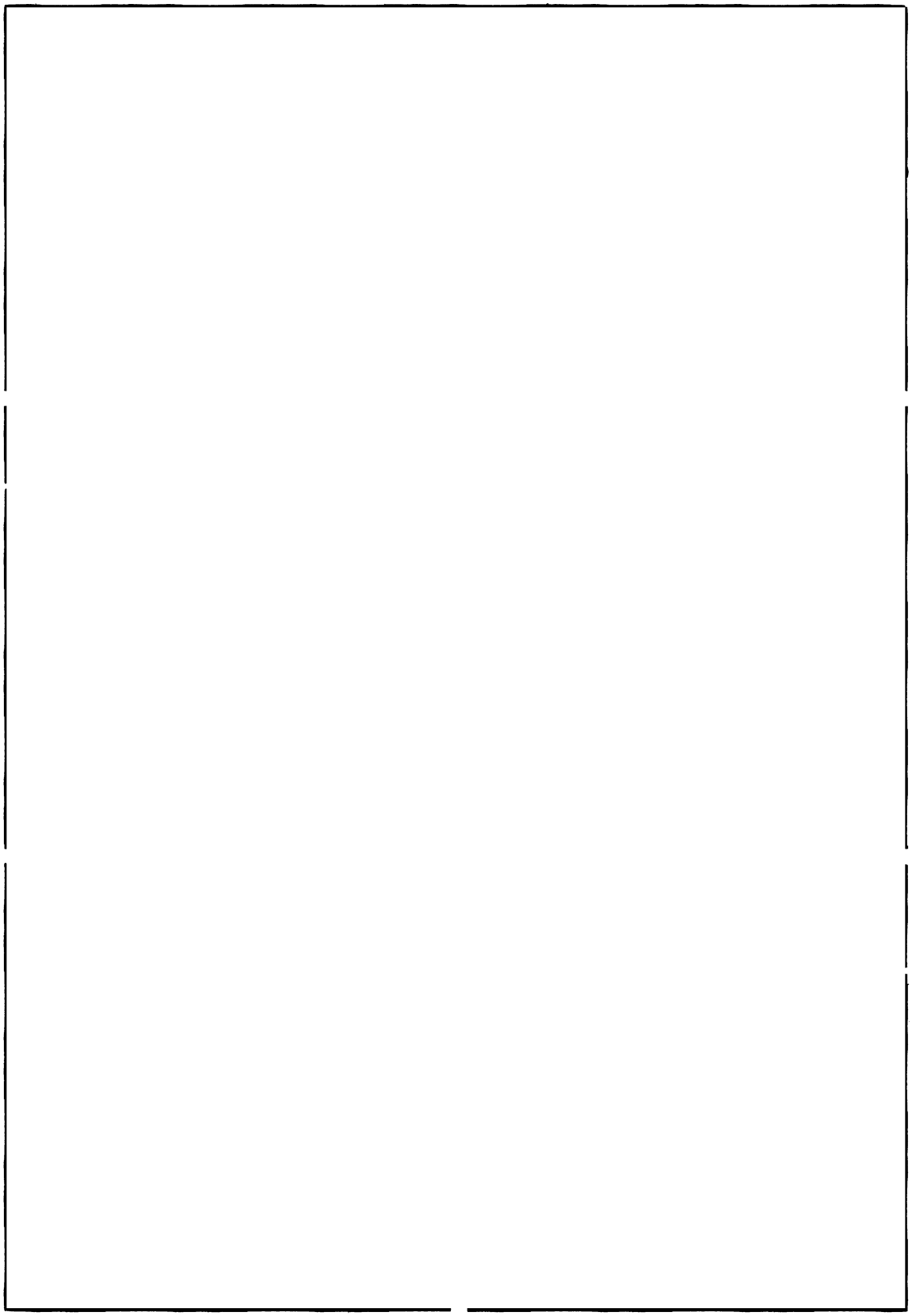
EXACTLY. THEY WILL BE SMART AND CAUTIOUS. AND BRAVE.
AND THEY WILL KEEP ONE ANOTHER SAFE.
ALL SO THEY CAN GET BACK HOME TO SEE US AGAIN.



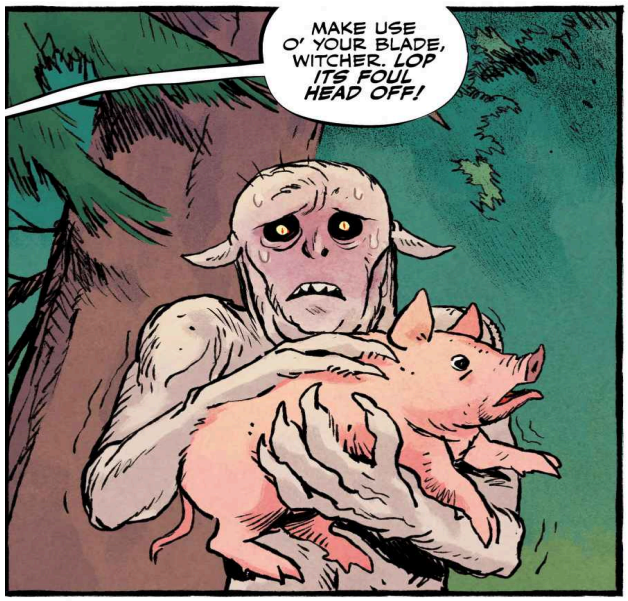

THE WITCHER
ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WOODS
AKHSSAA...*
*PHEW...
FILTHY PIG-STEALIN' WRETCH!




AT FIRST WE THOUGHT 'E WERE A FOX. BUT 'E LEFT NO BLOOD, NOT A DROP.
THEN WE THOUGHT--MAYBE A THIEF FROM THE VILLAGE OVER? BUT NAY, LOST THEY PIGLETS, TOO.
ONLY SENSE TO BE MADE WERE IT SOME VILE PIG-SNATCHIN' MONSTER!
FIND THE BEAST, WITCHER. KILL IT! FOUR PIGLETS I CAN PROMISE YE FOR THE TROUBLE.
HMM...
SO BE IT, FIVE. IN THE COMPANY OF A MASTER HAGGLER, I BE. BUT YOU MUST KILL THAT CURSED--
NEKKER.
WHA--?
YOUR "VILE PIG-SNATCHING MONSTER"--
--IT'S A NEKKER.
BY THE GODS, PRICED AT FOUR PIGLETS BUT WORTH EVERY ONE, YE ARE. PRAY TELL, HOW DO YOU KNOW?
OVER THERE.
A NEKKER.



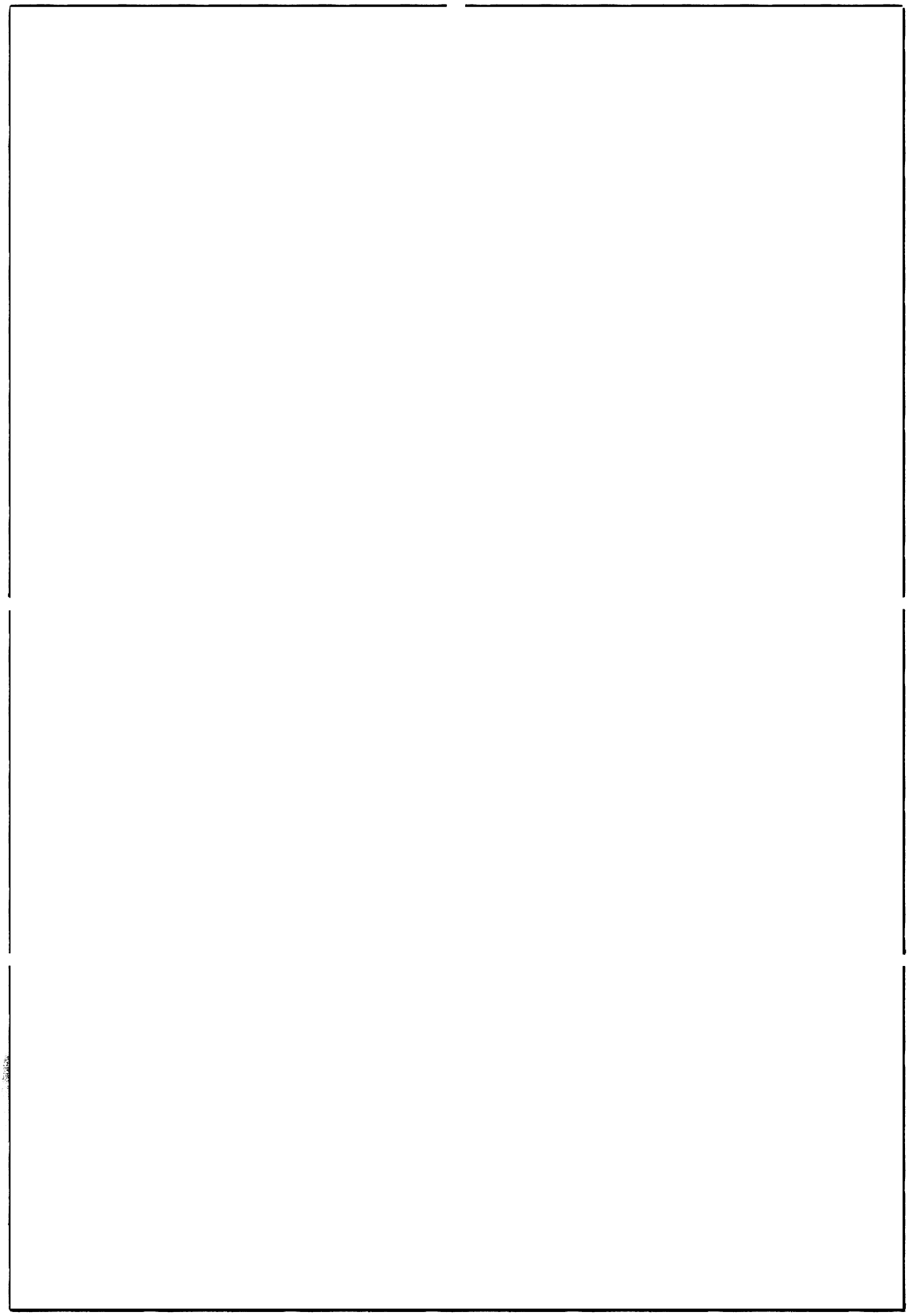
C'MON, THEN, WITCHER!
KILL THE WRETCH. CLAIM YOUR THREE-PIGLET REWARD!


MAKE USE O' YOUR BLADE, WITCHER. LOP ITS FOUL HEAD OFF!

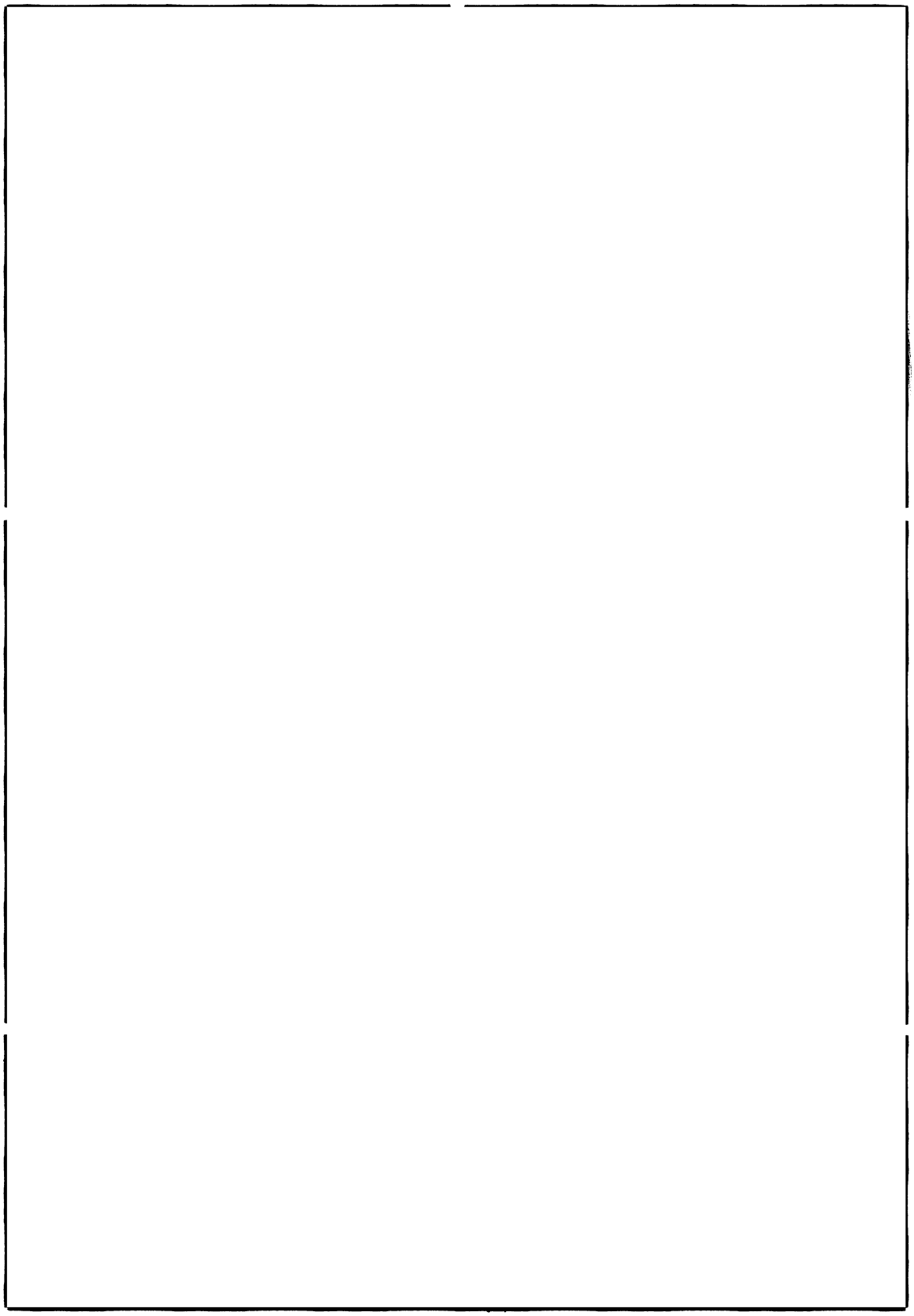
WHA--?! WHY'VE YE STOPPED?!
YOUNG, THIS ONE. FRIGHTENED, TOO.
COULD BE A BABE DANGLIN' FROM ITS MUM'S TEAT FOR ALL I CARE!
CUT DOWN THE FILTH!

AHA! I SEE NOW, BACK TO THE BARGAININ' TABLE, HM?
ME 'ANDS ARE TIED, WITCHER. SO BE IT, FOUR PIGLETS--FINAL OFFER!
ENOUGH. NOT GONNA KILL IT.

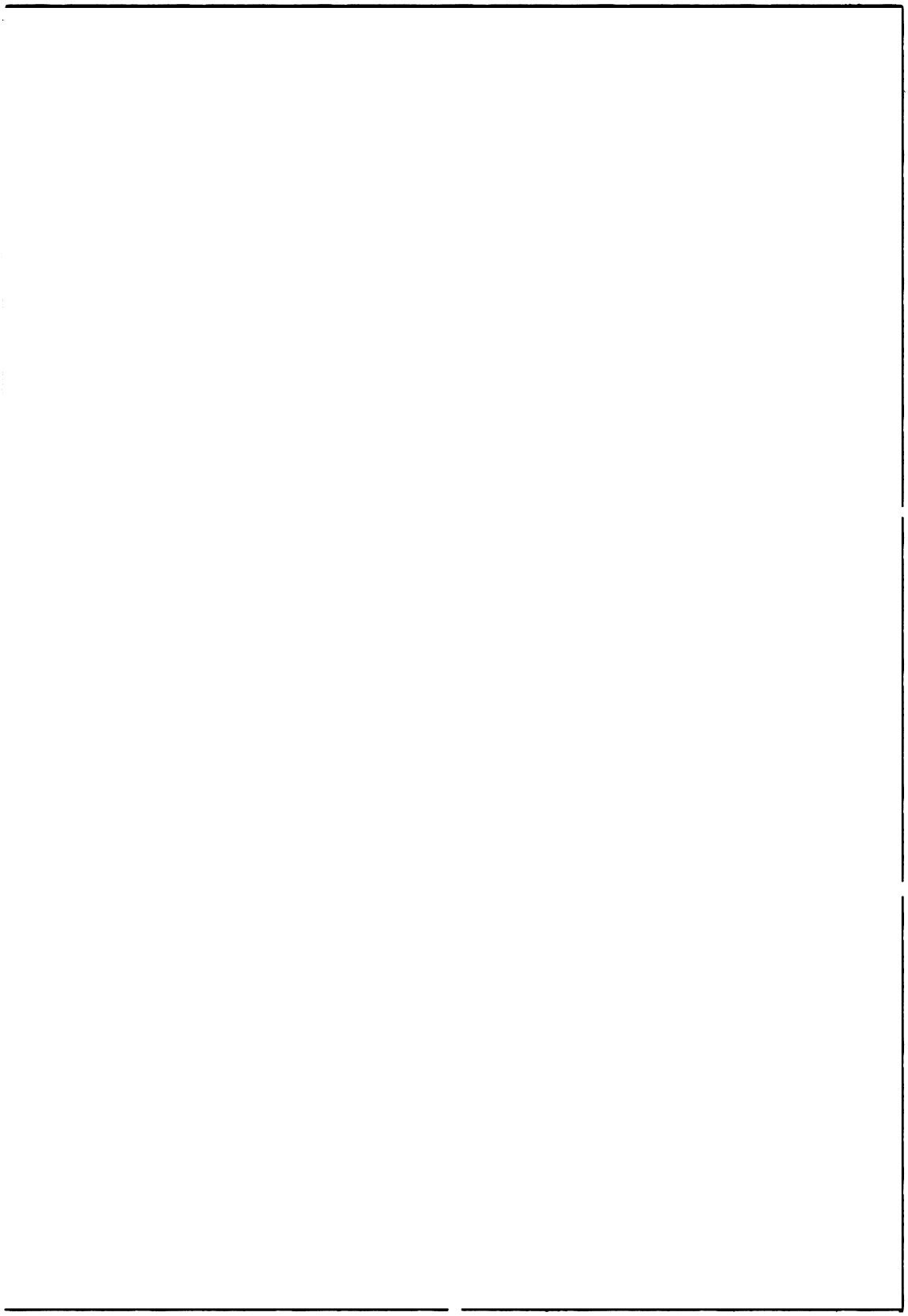
PIG ON THE GROUND. WALK AWAY, NEVER RETURN AND LIVE.
THAT'S IT... EASY, NOW...
I'LL GUT THE DEVIL!



JULA?
AYE, MUM, YOURS TRULY!
HERE TO SLAY THIS BEAST MESELF!
WASTE NOTHIN' ON THAT SECOND-RATE WITCHER! I'LL PROTECT OUR VILLAGE WITH ME OWN 'ANDS!
?
PLEASE, WITCHER, Y-YOU'RE NO RATE BUT FIRST! ME GIRL'S YOUNG, HEADSTRONG TO A FAULT. SHE'LL BEG FORGIVENESS!
MAKE IT FIVE PIGLETS YE. AND WE PUT THE UGLINESS BEHIND US.
!

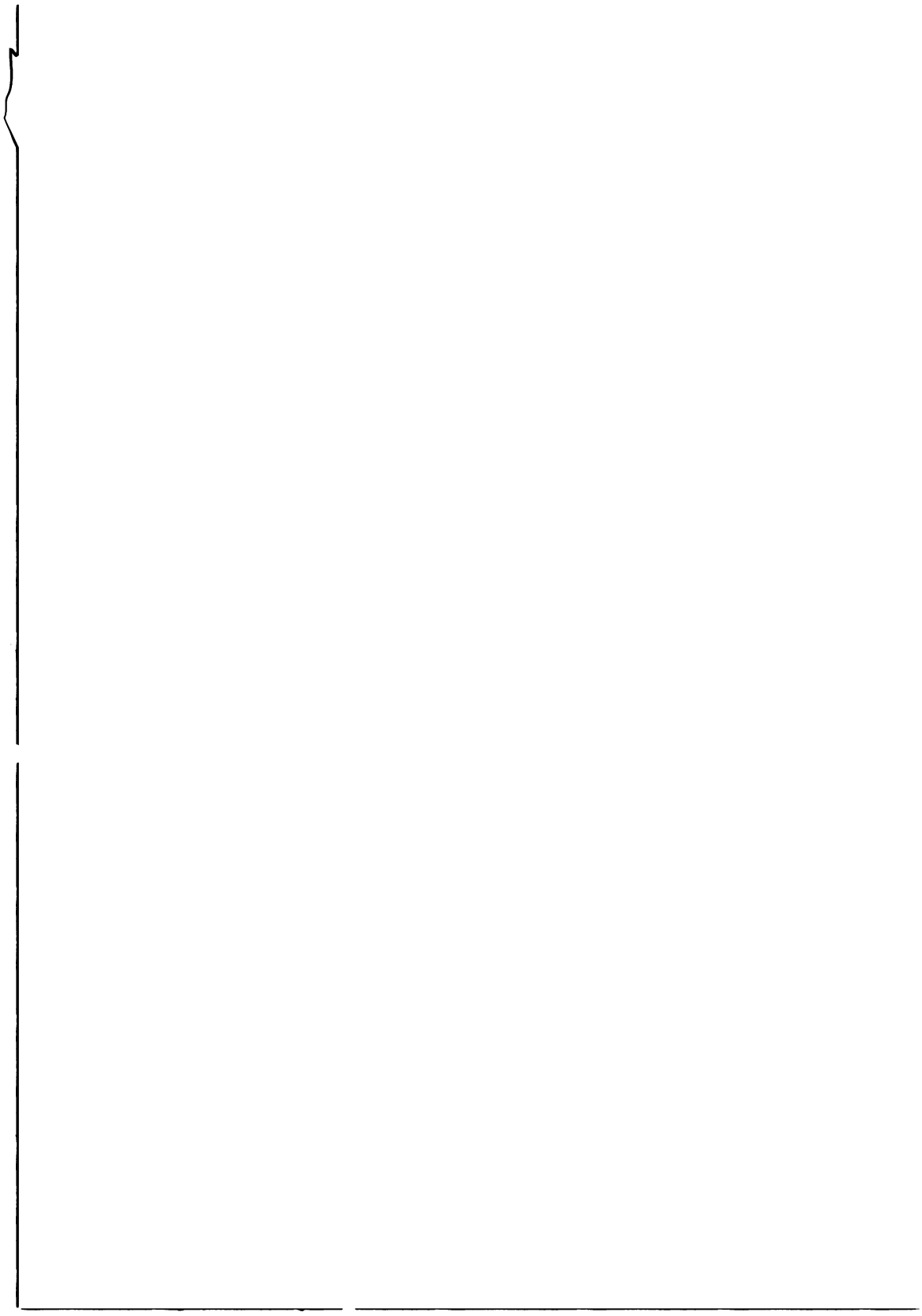


I'LL OFFER NO APOLOGY. NONE'S DESERVED!
IT'S TIME YOU PUT YOUR TRUST IN I ALONE, MUM. FOR THE VILLAGE FOLKS' SAKE!
HATE TO INTERRUPT THIS LITTLE FAMILY REUNION, BUT THERE WON'T BE ANY KILLING TODAY.
YE THINK I'M AFEAR'D O' YE, WITCHER?!
I'LL CUT THE BEAST'S HEAD OFF, THEN ROLL YOURS IN THE DIRT AFTER!
ITS HEAD STAYS WHERE IT--
BEG PARDON, WITCHER. IF ME DAUGHTER WANTS THE FIEND'S HEAD, SHE'LL 'AVE IT.
CONSIDER ME PIGLETS OFF THE TABLE.
APOLOGIES FOR THE INTRUSION, BUT IF ANYONE IS TO TAKE THE CREATURE'S HEAD, IT IS I.

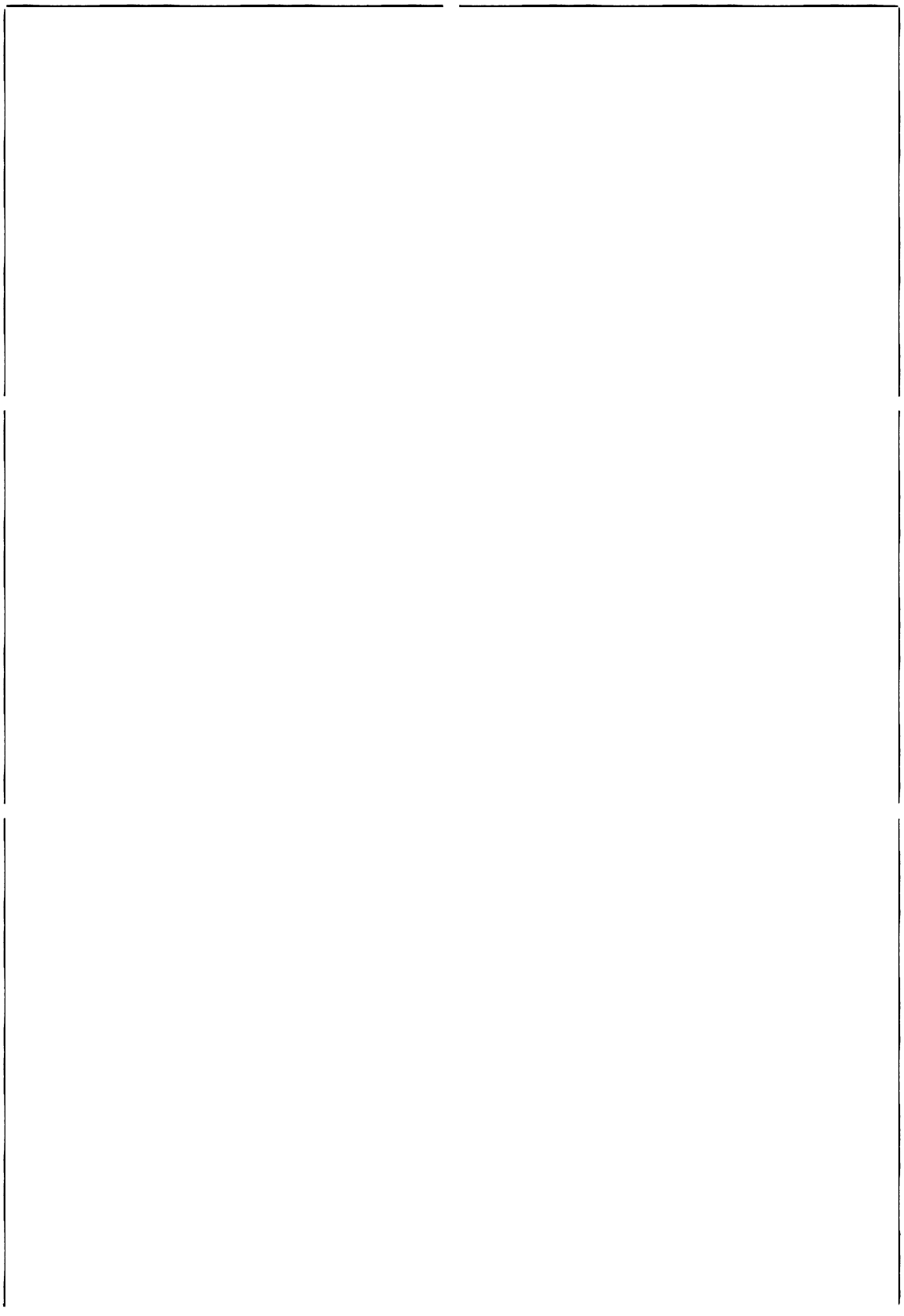


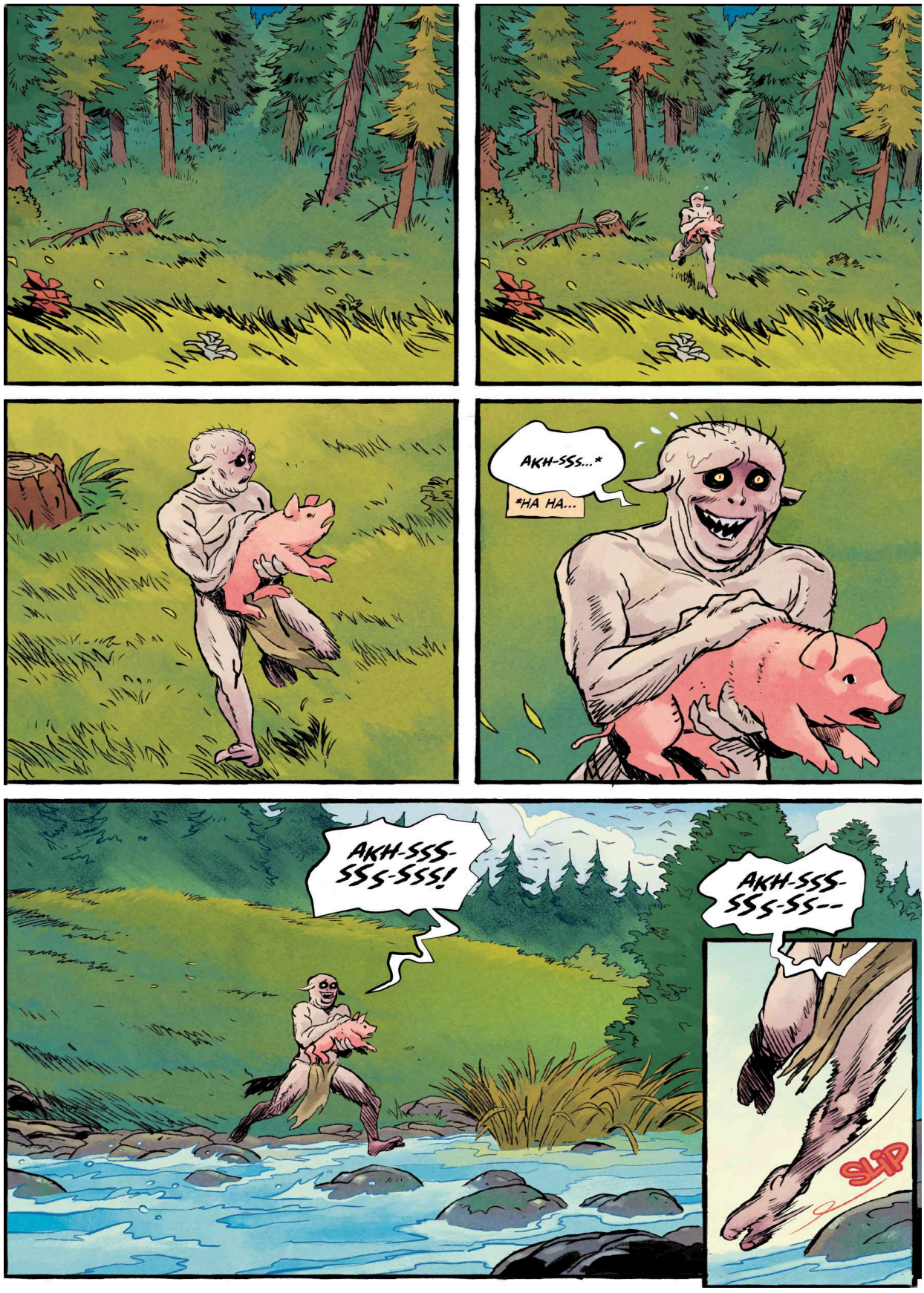
AND WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
AYE, JUST WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
MAGE, WANDERER, SENSUALIST-- PACO BARBLOES, AT YOUR SERVICE.
DID YOU KNOW THAT A NEKKER'S LIVER BREWED YIELDS A MOST EXQUISITE DECOCTION?
WHEN IMBIBED, THE VISIONS THUS BESTOWED BEND AND DAZZLE THE MIND?
LEAVE THE CREATURE TO ME, AND I SHALL GRANT YOU A TASTE OF THESE DELIGHTS.
YOU WILL NOT TAKE ITS HEAD!
AGREED. ON THAT, AT LEAST.

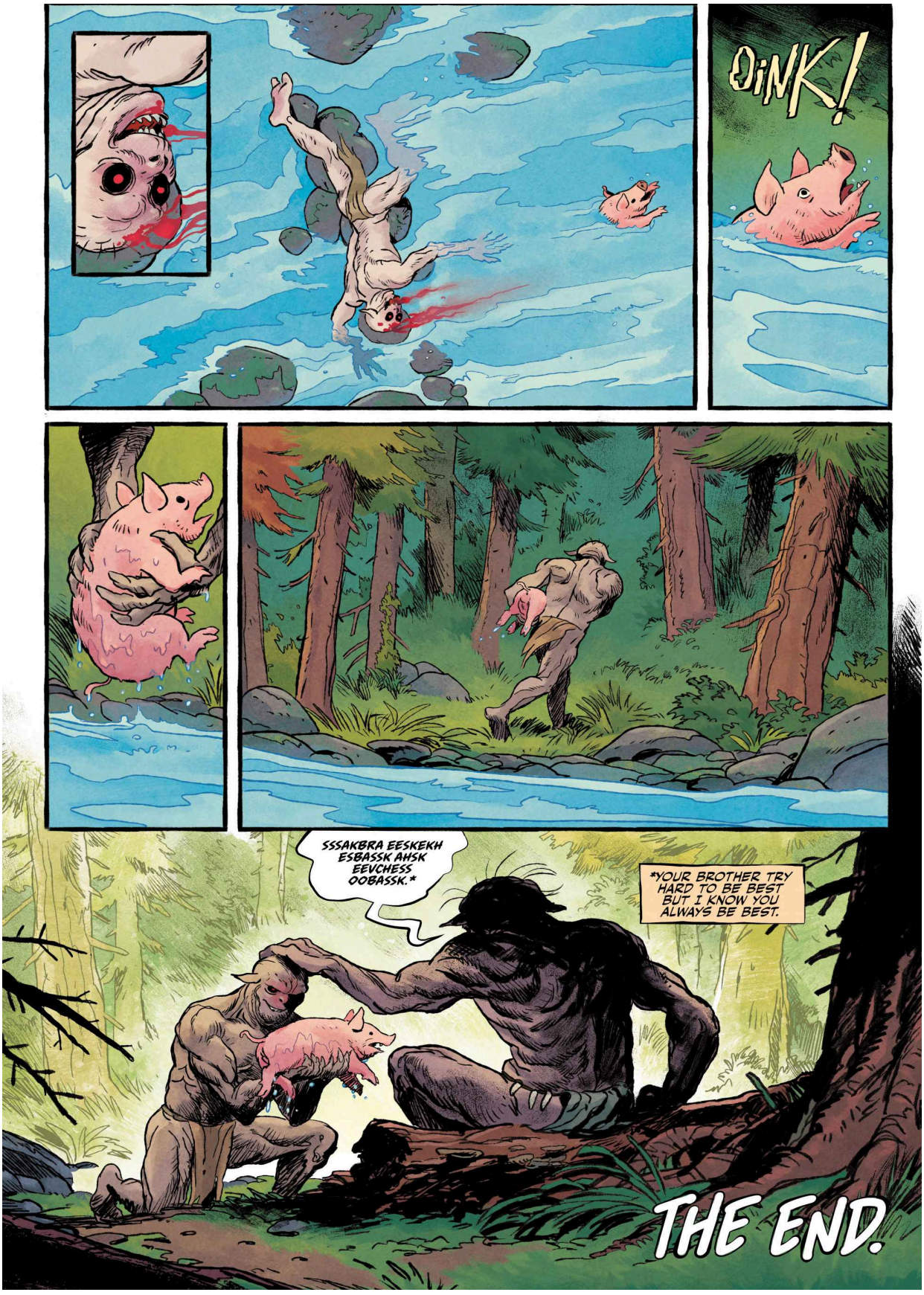
HMM, WE HAVE OURSELVES A SKELLIGAN STANDOFF, IT SEEMS.
REEE!
AHH!
CHNK
clic



AKH!
FWOOSH
J-JULA...?
JULA!
NOOO!
I-I'M SORRY...SO SORRY, JULA...I... I SHOULD NEVER 'AVE DOUBTED YOU!




AKH-SSS...*
*HA HA...
AKH-SSS-SSS-SSS!
AKH-SSS-SSS-SS--
SLIP


OINK!
SSSAKBRA EESKEKH ESBASSK AHSK EEVCHESS OOBASSK.*
*YOUR BROTHER TRY HARD TO BE BEST BUT I KNOW YOU ALWAYS BE BEST.
THE END.